

GOSPEL LIBERTY

Sent down from Heaven in a suffering Time.

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Christian Tolleration given and granted by the Lord, about the Worship of God, and in matters of Faith and Salvation, to the people of God, and primitive Christians, which is matter of comfort to them that are acquainted with God in the Spirit, and have the Testimony of his Love, and the signification of his acceptation who are true and faithful to God, In the principles and practices of the Saints in Christ Jesus : and primitive Christians, according to the perswasions of God upon their hearts and consciences, though for so doing they be attended with a suffering condition, which aforetime was and now is annexed to believing.

Philip. 1. 29. *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.*
2 Tim. 3. 12. *Yea and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.*

Written the 14th of the 3d moneth 1664. By R.F.

*Richard
Farnworth*

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FOrasmuch as God who is absolute in himself, who hath jurisdiction over all flesh and spirits, principalities, and powers, thrones and dominions, created, *Colos. 1. 16. 17.* ordained, and established by him, and for him, doth give, *18. 17.* grant, and allow of a liberty to men and Christians, as *26. 27.* men and Christians. First, as men in the creation to answer the end for which they were created: and Secondly, as Christians in communion and covenant with him, being *Gal. 4. 31.* children of the free woman, and are commanded and required by the Lord as a people in covenant with him, to stand fast in the liberty (of their tender consciences to God-ward, in point of Religion and worship of God) wherewith Christ hath made them free, *Gal. 5. 1.* They ought not to be denied or hindered of that liberty which is given, granted, and allowed unto them, by the Lord as men (to hinder them for answering the end of their creation) neither ought the true Christians and people in covenant with God, to be denied of liberty of Conscience, in point of Religion and worship of God, but to have liberty of conscience in matters of Faith and Salvation *Gal. 5. 13.* given, granted, and allowed unto them: Because they ¹⁴ are thereunto called of God, and it is against the doctrine of the Apostles, contrary to the minde and will of the Lord, and in opposition to the Scriptures, and the practice of the primitive Christians, to deny and refuse to grant it.

First, because the Saints and true Christians are commanded by the Lord to stand fast in the liberty (of conscience allowed in the gospel) wherewith Christ hath made them free. Secondly, because they are forbidden to be intangled again with the yoke of bondage (in point of religion and worship of God) as by the Scripture is evident. *Gal. 5.*

AB. 17.
 24. 25. 26.
 27. 28. 29.
 30. 31.
 Gal. 5. 1.
 Job. 4. 23.
 24.

To deny liberty of conscience in point of Religion and worship of God to any persons or people, is to deny that right which is given and granted unto them by the Lord, for Religion and worship, is that wherein Gods honour and glory is concerned : and as it is God who is to be worshiped, so the worship is the worship of God, wherein conscience is concerned, and not the worship of man, and it belongs to the Lord to prescribe, declare, reveal or make known his own worship both in matter and manner, and after made known to the conscience or a capacity in man, conscience ought to stand free, and not be forced threfrom, that God may perswade it to own, allow of, and close in with the same, and every man ought to be fully perswaded in his own heart, as by the Scripture is evident and plain, and who hath the like right, power, wisdom, and skil to inform, reform and perswade the heart of a man to him who made it, and knowes best the frame, temper, and disposition of it, and hath absolute power to punish it, or be merciful unto it, as it is disobedient or obedient to him in discipline, worship and government : for the right of heart searching and trying doth properly belong to the Lord, and not unto man as by the Scripture is plain.

Therefore God ought to have his own right preserved and kept unviolated, that he may inform, reform, and perswade the heart and conscience of man, both to answer the end for which he was created, and to fear, reverence, honour, and obey him in conscience to God-ward, as a worshipper of him, and the right of men ought to be preserved, that they may not be forced from but left to their liberty, to receive and retain the trueth and teachings of God, in matters of Faith and Salvation, that they may

may continue therein, and not be perswaded or forced therefrom by any man, for the Apostle declares to the *Galatians*, that they did run well, but some hindred them, that they should not obey the truth, and they that hindred them did not well in so doing: for saith he this perswasion cometh not of him that calleth you, as by the Scripture is plain. *Gal. 5. 7. 8.*

They who are against liberty of conscience in matters of Faith and Salvation, and would either by perswasions or threatnings hinder people from obeying and walking in the truth of the Gospel, which God makes known unto them, and perswades them to walk in, do not well in so doing, and though he that was born after the flesh did persecute him that was born after the spirit, he did it without any right or authority from God, and therefore the son of the bond woman must be cast out, and not be heir with the son of the free woman, as saith the Scripture. *Gal. 4. 29. 30.*

Christ hath purchased a liberty, and fredome for the *Gal. 5. 1.* Saints and believers in him in point of religion, and in matters of faith and salvation, and therefore they ought not to be deprived of it: but ought to have it granted and allowed unto them, by such as are professors of him, that as they have begun in the spirit, they may not be *Gal. 3. 1. 2, 3.* forced and carried back again into the flesh. But may have the liberty of their consciences in matters of Faith and Salvation allowed and granted, to obey the truth of the gospel according to the manifestation and perswasion of the word and spirit of God, and that they may run well in the way of the Lord without molestation or hindrance by them that professe the truth. For in *Jesus Christ* neither *Circumcision* availeth any thing, nor *uncircumcision* *Gal. 5. 7. 8.*
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but a new Creature, and Faith which worketh by love Gal. 5. 5. 6. Gal. 6. 15. 16.

Gal. 4. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. Gal. 6. 15. 16. And as many as walk according to this rule, that is to say the rule of the new creature, *which is the spirit of Christ Jesus. Gal. 4. 6.* Peace be on them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God. Rom. 8. 14.*

So many and no more, as by the Scripture is evident. *Rom. 8. 15. 16. 17.* *Rom. 8. 9.* And as the children of God are led by the Spirit of God, so therein they are in the liberty given and allowed of God, *2 Cor. 3. 17. 18.* To serve and worship him in the glorious ministration of the spirit, which exceeds and excels that of *Moses* in a far greater glory, and therein they ought to continue, and not be forced from it by men.

And as for the people of God (reproachfully) called Quakers, they have under every government peaceably demeaned themselves ever since they were brought into covenant with God, and have suffered for their obedience and faithfulness to the Lord, more then any people in this Nation for many years by past : and the Lord hath hitherto tryed them, and they have been found faithful to the Lord upon tryal, and they have been tryed by men, and by the power and authority of the kingdome, and do appear upon every tryal to be a people true to their principles to God-ward ; and honest and upright in their dealings with men, & it is well known to the Nation, that they are a harmlesse people, and very industrious and profitable to men, and of an honest and good conversation, unwilling to be burthensome unto them, wherefore there is no just cause why they should be injured, wronged, or destroyed, either in their principles, persons
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or estates for their tender consciences and faithfulness to God in matters of Faith and Religion, but ought to be defended and preserved therein.

And as for their meetings upon the account of religion to wait upon God as his people, there is as much and more of the spirit and life of truth, and of the refreshing vertue of the word and power of God amongst them made known from the Lord unto them, for their satisfaction, and souls consolation, as amongst any professing people in the Nation. And it doth appear after several years trial had of that people, that their meetings never produced any bad effects either to the terrour of the people, or endangering the peace and safety of the kingdom. And therefore they ought not to be suppressed and broken, but rather countenanced and preserved in their principles and practises, which are so faithful and honest both towards God and man.

And whereas it hath been said by some of them in authority, that the Quakers are in some part of their principles much like unto the primitive Christians, who would not take up arms to fight either for or against the best of Kings or worst of Tyrants. And therefore the Quakers say they are to be commended in that, and others of the Magistrates have said as concerning the Quakers having any hand in plotting or designing mischief against the King and his government, they are so innocent and harmless that they durst put them into the Magazin, so that me thinks they should have no cause to suspect them, for indeed they are a people that wishes no man any harm, but would rather do good unto all men; therefore they ought not to be destroyed or banished, but countenanced and preserved in their principles and practises which
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are good and answers to the witnesse of God in the consciences of men.

- It is more consistant with trueth, and well pleasing to God, and agreeable to the other part of the principles of the people of God and primitive Christians, to suffer persecution for their faithfulness to God, and their continuation in the trueth of the Gospel, and meeting together to wait upon God, in the way of his worship, and have the love and favour of God, then to be unfaithful to God, and untrue to their principles: by forsaking the same, for fear of the frownes and rebukes of the spirit of the world, or an outward suffering from men, and incur the Anger and displeasure of God for so doing, *Heb. 10. 26. Heb. 10. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31.*
- 2 Tim. 3. 10. 11. 12. 14.* God had a people in *Egypt* under great bondage, and in great captivity, bowed down and oppressed, but he remembred them in his mercy: and sent his servant *Moses* as his messenger to acquaint them with it, and also to speak to *Pharoah* then King of *Egypt*, by whose power they were oppressed, to require of him their liberty and freedom in the worship which God made known and required to be performed and done. But King *Pharoah* denyed the Lord in that thing, and gave the Lord an occasion against him, who brought great judgement upon his kingdome, because he refused to give liberty to the people of God in the worship or service of God, and said they were idle, and yet when he was under the sense of the judgements of God, he promised them liberty, but he did not regard to make good his promise, which signified nothing but as a testimony against him, and to provoke the Lord to wrath, who renewed his judgements, and weakned the power and policy of *Egypt* for
- Exod. 3. 1. 2. 10. 13.*
- Exod. 8. 1. Exod. 9. 1.*
- Exod. 11. 1. 2. 3. 4.*
- Exod. 12. 8. 12. 13. 14. 15.*
- Exod. 8. 8. 12. 13. 14. 15.*
- Exod. 8. 25. 26. 27.*

Egypt, for withstanding the liberty which God required of *Pharoah*, on the behalf of the oppressed Israel: and in his own time made *Pharoah* to know that he was too strong for him, and by his power alone wrought their deliverance after many trials, that they might give glory unto him, as by the Scripture is plain, *Exod. 12. 40. 41. 42.* *Exod. 12. 29. 30. 3. 32. 33.*

Though *Pharoah* the King, commanded the Hebrew Midwives to destroy all the male children of the Hebrews, when they did the office of a Midwife, yet because the fear of God was in their hearts, they durst not do it: so that they rather chused to obey God in preserving the lives of the innocents, then to obey the command of the King, which was so contrary to the minde of the Lord, who would have had the seed destroyed, which the Lord preserved and blessed. *Exod. 1. 15. 16. 17. Exod. 1. 20. 21.*

King *Pharoah* could have been content to have letten the old stock of Israel have lived, if there had been no increase, but policy taught him to put a stop to that, and if the Lord had not put a stop to that design, Israel had been cut off and destroyed in the seed. For if the Hebrew Midwives had not feared and obeyed God rather than man, the male children had been destroyed, when they had come out of the womb. *Exod. 1. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. &c.*

Daniel was a man beloved and blessed of the Lord, and there were such as sought an occasion against him, with an intent and purpose (under the colour of transgressing a known Law) to have cut him off and destroyed him: as there have been and are now such as seeks an occasion against the *Daniels* and beloved people of God, with an intent to destroy them. And as they could finde no occasion against *Daniel* but for the law and worship of his

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God, so they can find no occasion against the *Daniels*, or beloved people of God now, but for their obedience to the law and worship of their God, according to the manifestation and perswasion of the spirit and word of God.

And when they wanted a Law to destroy *Daniel* by for his worship of God, then all the Presidents of the Kingdome, the Governours, and the Princes, the Counsellours, and the Captaines Assembled together to the *Dan. 6. 4.* King, and consulted together to establish a Royal Statute, *5. 6. 7. 8. 9.* and to make a firm decree, and the King signed the same, (against liberty of conscience, in matters of faith and religion) to bind the conscience, and force it from the worship of God for a certain time under pain of death, or by being cast into the Lions den, as by the Scripture is plain.

Now when *Daniel* knew that the law was made (against liberty of conscience in point of religion and worship of God) or the writing as aforesaid was sealed; he was faithful to God, in disobeying such a Statute law against liberty of conscience, rather then disobey God, and offend his tender conscience, as by the Scripture appeareth, *Dan. 6. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. &c.* And God did own and countenance *Daniel* in that thing by preserving of him, forasmuch as innocency was found in *Daniel* before the Lord in so doing, *Dan. 6. 22.*

Whereby it appears and remaines true, that *Daniel* was innocent and justified in the sight of the Lord, for disobeying the Statute or decree which was made against liberty of conscience in point of religion and worship of God. And it is not unwarrantable or without Scripture example, for the people of God to obey

bey God rather then man, in matters of Faith and Salvation, when a law is made against Liberty of conscience in point of religion and worship of God as aforesaid.

The Priests were grieved at *Peter* and *John*, because they taught the people, and after the Priests and the Rulers had taken knowledge of *Peter* and *John*, that they had been with Iesus, they was unwilling that the truth should spread any further, and to the intent that the truth might be suppressed and spread no further. First, they consulted together, and said; let us straitly threaten them that they henceforth speak to no man in this name, as if *Peter* and *John* had been afraid of threatning to have left their Ministry like the Priests of this time.

And secondly, they commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Iesus (for the Priests would have none to be teachers but themselves, and whom they appoint) but *Peter* and *John* answered and said, whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more then unto God, judge yee, for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard,

Whereby it is evident and remaines true that the people of God are to obey God, in matters of faith and salvation, though they be threatned and commanded to the contrary by men, and it is right in the sight of God to obey God in such cases rather then the commands of men, that are contrary to the mind of the Lord, and it would be wrong to disobey God because of the threats of men as aforesaid, and it was the principle and practice of the primitive Christians so to do, and rather suffer by Priests, Rulers and Magistrates for their obedience and faithfulness to God in matters of faith and salvation, then to deny their testimony, and comply with the sins of the times,

for any by ends, and to avoid a suffering condition.

Concerning the Primitive Christians both Ministers and People.

AR. 21. 13.
to the end
AR. 22.
2 Cor. 6.
AR. 4.

The Ministers of the gospel in the primitive times, were called in question about their doctrine and Ministry by the Priests, Rulers and Magistrates, and threatned and commanded to preach no more in the name of Jesus, which was indirect opposition to liberty of conscience granted and given by the Lord unto his Ministers in matters of faith and salvation, but obstructed and denyed by Priests, Rulers and Magistrates then, who commanded them contrary to the commands of God in such cases, but the Ministers of the gospel in the primitive times could not be subject to such commands of men, as would have forc't conscience from performing its duty and service to God in matters of faith and salvation, and they said in plain terms without any evasions, we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard, it was matter of conscience to them, and they would rather suffer by men then disobey God and offend a good conscience to God-wards as aforesaid, as by the Scripture is evident and plain.

AR. 4. 18.
19. 20.

The Ministers of the gospel and primitive Christians, was no persecutors, but were persecuted, for said *Paul* to *Timothie* thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, faith, long suffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at *Antioch*, at *Iconium*, at *Lystra*, what persecutions I endured, but out of them all the Lord delivered me, yea and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution *2 Tim. 3.* But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, *2 Tim. 3.*

1 Tim. 3.
10. 11. 12.

13. So it appeares and is plain by the Scriptures, that the godly were and are attended with persecutions, both Ministers and people, and that by reason of evill men and seducers, which are and were persecutors.

The Ministers of the gospel in the primitive times were to continue in the things, which they had learned of God, and were assured of as by the Scripture appeareth *2.Tim. 3.14.* So were the Primitive Christians to continue in the word and doctrine of Christ, by which it might appear that they were disciples indeed and lovers of Iesus.

And said the Apostle stand fast in one spirit with one minde, striving together for the faith of the gospel, and in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of Salvation, and that of God, for unto you it is given on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake. *Philip. 1. 27.28. 29.*

Whereby it is evident and remaines true, that the true Christians are not persecutors, but are true believers in Christ, and subjects unto him, and a suffering condition is annexed to believing, and as none can truly believe unto salvation, but them to whom it is given, so none can truly suffer for Christ and the Gospel, but them to whom it is given and therefore they need not to be terrified by their adversaries, for it is to the persecutors an evident token of perdition, but to the true believers in Christ who are the true sufferers it is to them an evident token of salvation *Phil. 1. 27.28. 29.* and that of God as by the Scripture is plain as aforesaid.

The Ministers of the Gospel of Christ who have received their ministry of God, to minister from him to the soules of the people, are in preaching the word to be instant in season and out of season, according to the charge given

2 Tim. 4.
1. 2. 3. 4.

given before the Lord, as by the Scripture is plain. And when is preaching the word out of season, but when it is either forbidden by men, or when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall heap up to themselves teachers having itching ears, as by the Scripture appears.

The Scriptures declare that the time will come, when people will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall heap up to themselves Teachers, having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables, and if that time be already come, (or be yet to come) at such a time, the Ministers of the gospel of Christ who have received their ministry of God, are not to change their religion, and turn away from the truth and worship of God, (like the Priests of this Priest turning time,) but the ministers of the gospel, are to watch in all things, and endure afflictions, do the work of Evangelists, and make full proof of their ministry as it appeareth 2 Tim. 4. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

Concerning the godly meetings of the Primitive Christians and Saints in Christ Jesus, and people of God in former Ages.

We do not read in the Scriptures of truth that the people of God and true Christians did ever imprison, fine, and banish, or sell one another for their religion and worship: but we read that *Haman* did envie the good and welfare of the Jewes, and said unto the King, there is a certain people scattered abroad, and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy Kingdome, and their lawes are divers from all people, neither keep they the Kings lawes, therefore it is not for the Kings profit to suffer

suffer them, If it please the King let it be written that they may be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of Silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the businesse, to bring it into the Kings treasuries, and the King consented unto him, and they were designed for destruction as by the Scripture is plain, *Ester*, 3. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15.

But it pleased the Lord to let the King know the innocency of his people, and how they were not so dangerous unto the welfare and safety of his Kingdome, as *Haman* had informed him, and the King changed his purpose, revoked what he had signed against them, and became under God a preserver of them, and the King declared and said, oftentimes fair speeches of those that are put in trust to manage their friends affairs, hath caused many that are in authority to be pertakers of innocent blood, and hath enwrapped them in remediless calamities, beguiling with the falshood and deceit of their lew'd disposition, the Innocency & goodnesse of Princes: now ye may see this, as we have declared, not so much by antient Histories, as yee may, if yee search what hath been wickedly don of late, through the pestilent behaviour of them that are unworthily placed in authority, and we must take care for the time to come, that our kingdome may be quiet and peaceable for all men, both by changing our purposes, and alwayes judging things that are evident with more equal proceeding, as appeareth in the letter of *Artaxerxes*, wherein he taxeth *Haman* and revoketh the decree procured by *Haman* to destroy the Jewes, *Ester*. 16 Chapter,

See it in
the Apo-
crypha.

Would it not be good in the sight of God, and very profitable to this Kingdome, and commendable also, if
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the King and the Parliament did under God take such a care for the time to come, as that the Kingdome might be quiet and peaceable for all men, both by repealing that law made against liberty of conscience, and allowing an equal liberty to all men, in the exercise of their consciences as to God-wards in matters of faith and salvation: and alwaies by judging things that are evident with more equal proceeding,

There was a time in the dayes of the Prophet *Malachi*,
Mal. 3. 13. wherein the words of some were stout against the Lord, yet they would have excused themselves, saying, what have we spoken so much against the Lord? to the which the Lord answered them by his Prophet saying, Ye have
Mal. 3. 14. said it is in vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his Ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord, and they called the proud
Mal. 3. 15. happy, and they that wrought wickednesse were set up, and they that tempted God were delivered.

Then they that feared the Lord separated from the Iniquities of the time, met often together and spoke one to another, and the Lord was present in their assemblies
Mal. 3. 16. after a spiritual manner, and did own them and their meetings, for he both hearkned and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before the Lord, for them that feared him, and thought upon his name, and the Lord made promise to such for their encouragement
Mal. 3. 17. and comfort: and they shall be mine saith the Lord in that day when I make up my jewels, and I will spare them (that serveth me) as a man spareth his son that serveth him, then shall ye return and discern between the Righteous and the Wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not. *Mal. 3. 16. 17. 18.*

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When Christ Jesus was come in the dayes of his humiliation and were conversant amongst men, after that John was cast into prison, for preaching and performing the Office and duty of a Minister, or delivering that message which he was sent about from the Lord to perform, as a foreruuner of Christ, then Christ Iesus himself began to preach, and say, *Repent for the kingdome of Heaven is at hand, and there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Dicapolis, and from Judea, and from Hierusalem, and from beyond Jordan, and seeing the multitude, he went up into a mountain, and when he was set, he opened his mouth and taught them,* as you may read, *Mat 5. 1. 2. &c.*

Math. 4.
12. 13. 14.
15. 16. 17.

Mat. 4. 25.

But if there had been a law made against meeting to the number of five or above, (and not in Parish Churches or Chappels, and contrary to the common way of meeting, preaching and hearing, under pain of Imprisonment, Fines, and Banishment,) then Christ and the multitude must either not have met after that manner, or else they might have suffered as his Saints and servants are like to do now, but it is evident by the example of Christ, that he never intended any such law to be made in such direct opposition to his example and practice, and though the people came from many places, and parts of the Country to that meeting with Jesus upon the mountain, there was no danger to the safety and happinesse of the government, though suspicion might arise in the minds of some, and be ready to judge it unsafe to suffer such meetings.

And it came to passe that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judea, beyond Jordan, and great multitudes followed him

Mat. 19.
1. 2.

him, as by the Scripture is plain, But if Christ was here now and did so, he must be imprisoned, and banished by a law, and by that law the people might be kept from following Christ, or else suffer imprisonment and banishment for following of him, and that by such as pretends to be friends unto him. But it is not every one that pretends love to him, or saith Lord Lord, *that shall enter into the kingdome of Heaven, but he that doth the will of the Father*, as Christ Iesus hath declared and said.

Mat. 23. 29. And Jesus came at another time nigh unto the Sea of Galilee, and went up into a mountain, and sate down and great multitudes came unto him, as by the Scripture is plain, whereby it is evident and remaines true, that there either was no law that prohibited such great meetings on mountaines, and to keep the people back from following of Iesus, after that manner, or if there were any such lawes then in being, they were not regarded by Christ, and the followers of him, in matters of faith and salvation.

Mark 2. 1. 2. And at another time Iesus entred into Capernaum, and it was noised that he was in the house, and straitway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no not so much as about the door, and he preached the word unto them, as you may read in the Scripture of truth. But if Iesus was here now and did so, might not he and the people be imprisoned and banished or sold for so doing, consider well of it, and let the Lord judge in this case.

And before Christs ascension, being assembled together with his disciples and friends which were about the number of five, he commanded them that they should not depart from Ierusalem, but wait for the promise of the

the Father, which saith he, ye have heard of me, *Act. 1. 1. 2. 3. 4.* And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James, (which were above the number of five) and they did not disperse themselves into numbers under five, but these all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women, and Mary the mother of Iesus, and with his brethren as you may read *Act. 1. 13. 14.*

And if there had been such a law that they might not have met upon the account of religion (from a parish Church) to the number of five or above under pain of imprisonment and banishment, as now, they might either have disobeyed the commands of Christ, or else have broken such a law, as is directly against that command of the Lord Iesus, as by the Scripture is evident. *Act. 1. 13. 14.*

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place, (and not dispersed into companies under the number of five) as you may read *Act. 2. 1.* And suddenly there came a sound from Heaven, as of a rushing mighty winde, and it filled the house where they were sitting, *Act. 2. 2.* (so that they were not met in a parish Church or Chapel) but in a house, and God mightily honoured their meeting, for they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak as the spirit gave them utterance, as by the Scripture is evident. *Act. 2. 1. 2. 3. 4.*

And the Servants of Iesus did meet together in houses and in great numbers also, or else how should there have been three thousand soules added unto them on one day,

as there was by the preaching of Peter. *Act. 2.* And in private houses they met often, and also in multitudes, as by the Scripture appeareth, and some of them believed and consorted with *Paul* and *Silas*, and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few, but the Jewes which believed not moved with envie, took unto them certain lew'd fellowes of the baser sort and gathered a company, and set all the City on an uproar, and assaulted the house of *Jason*, and sought to bring them out to the people, and they drew *Jason* and certain of the brethren unto the Rulers of the city, crying these that have turned the world upside down are come hither also, whom *Jason* hath received, saying, that there is another King, one Iesus, and they troubled the people and the Rulers of the city, when they heard these things, so you may see how the old envious professours, and the baser sort of people, did trouble the people and Rulers by haling out and abusing the primitive christians and reporting of them as aforesaid, but the true christians did not persecute any but were persecuted, as by the Scripture appeareth. *Act. 17. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8.*

And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the Disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia, Acts 20. 1. And upon the first day of the week the Disciples came together, and met neither in a Parish Church nor a Chappel, but in a private house, and Paul continued his speech until midnight in the Chamber where they were gathered together, Acts 20. 7, 8.

Whereby it is evident and remains true, that it was the practice of Christ and his Apostles to meet together in private houses, and in great numbers, and they never made any uproar, nor abused any, but they were abused,

sed, and suffered; as those do who follow their examples, Eph. 5. and live in the Spirit as they did. It was the practise of Gal. 5. 16. the primitive Christians to assemble themselves together, 22, 23, 24, and wait upon God in the way of his Worship, and they 25. were to hold fast their Profession without wavering, because he was faithful that promised, Heb. 10. though they 22, 23. were persecuted for meeting and worshipping contrary to the custome of the envious Jewes, and contrary to the way and worship of the World, as aforesaid.

Whereby it is evident and remains true, that it is the duty of true Christians, Saints, and Believers in Christ Jesus, to be true and faithful unto God, in meeting together in the Way and Worship of God, and mind their continuation with God in the same, though they be attended with a suffering condition from men for so doing: and as it is their duty to meet together as the Worshipers of God, according to the manifestation and persuasions of God, so it is a danger to neglect the same, as by the Scripture is evident and plain, Heb. 10. 22, 23, 24, 25.

And as Preaching is not an Art of Nature, but a spiritual gift, so none are required by the Lord to minister from him to the people, but them to whom it is given, and all have a true right given and allowed of God, to minister from him to the people, to whom that gift of Ministrati- 1 Pet. 4. on is given, and such ought not to be forbidden, because 10, 11. there is a toleration to such given and granted in heaven, as every man hath received the gift, so let him minister the same one to another, as good Stewards of the manifold grace of God; If any man speak, let him speak as the Oracles (or Sayings) of God: If any man Minister, let him do it as of the Ability which God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified, as is written 1 Pet. 4. 10, 11. And

Order of
Baptisme.

And for as much as it is a Fundamental of the Episcopal or Protestant Religion, and according to the Constitutions and Canons of the Church of *England*, that all who are Admitted into Church fellowship, must in order to their Admission, and in order to the obtaining to themselves the honourable Title of Christians, promise and vow unto God before many witnesses, to forsake the Devil and all his Works, and to keep Gods holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the days of their lives : Are not the Protestants or Episcopalians hereby bound from persecuting any for Conscience towards God, in matters of Faith and Salvation ? Because it is acknowledged to be a work of the Devil, and contrary to the will of God to persecute Christians for matters of Faith and Salvation in point of Religion and Worship of God.†

2 Coll.
for Peace.

And for as much as it is declared in the Common Prayer Book or Liturgy of the Church of *England*, that the Service of God is perfect freedom, whether ought any to be forced either to it or from it by outward compulsion, but rather left to their freedome, that God may convince and perswade them ? Because whatsoever is not of Faith is sin, and every man ought to be fully perswaded in his own heart, in matters of Faith and Salvation, and it properly belongs to the Lord to make known his own Worship, who knows how to perswade the heart both to believe, and close in with the same.

And whereas it is said in the Common Prayer, that God is the Author of Peace, and Lover of Concord, ought not the Episcopalians or Protestants to be like minded unto him ? If so, they would see it to be below the life and spirit of a true Christian, to force Conscience before they convince it. And so ought to seek their peace and welfare,

fare, and not their destruction and Ruine, who are yet unconvinced or perswaded by them, who themselves do not walk up to their profession.

And whereas in the Liturgie of the Church of *England* Com. up-
on the
Feasts of
Trin. it is acknowledged that it is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, (worship and serve the Lord) or give Thanks unto the Almighty and Everlasting God, why then should we be bound from doing that which is accounted and declared to be very meet, right, and our bounden duty at any time, and in any place, especially by them who do own and profess the same as aforesaid.

And whereas the Priests, Bishops, and Curates do declare and confess by the Liturgie of the Church of *England*, that there is no health in them, meaning no souls health, nor saving health in any of them, because it is generally acknowledged by them, and upon a spiritual Account, what Reason can be produced in Reason why any man should be forced against his Conscience to come to seek Cure of them, who plainly say they have no health in them; and if they have no health in them, as they say they have not, Have they any Cure of Souls in them? If not, to whom must the wounded souls go to be cured? Is it not best to leave them to their freedome, that the Lord may direct them to whom to go to be cured, when they are wounded by sin, and the Temptations of Satan, that they may also be delivered from under the bondage of Corruption.

Concerning

Concerning the Church according to the Constitutions and Canons, or Liturgie; And also of practising according to the Liturgie of the Church of England.

Asto the Church, who are accounted true Members thereof, and the Condition of their being admitted into Fellowship therewith, according to the Constitutions, and Canons, or Liturgie; None are to be Admitted into Church-Fellowship, neither can any obtain to themselves the honourable Title of Christians, but such as do Covenant with God by Promise and Vow before many Witnesses, to be perfect and free from sin; First, by forsaking the Devil and all his Works: And secondly, by keeping Gods holy Will and Commandments, and walking in the same all the dayes of their lives. And seeing that none can be Admitted into Church-Fellowship nor obtain to themselves that Honourable Title of Christians, but upon the aforesaid Conditions, Have, and Do not all thereby, who have Entered and are Admitted as aforesaid, both Covenanted, and do Covenant with God against Persecution about matters of Religion? And if they persecute any upon that Account, Do they not break Covenant with God, and Violate the Fundamentalls of their Religion?

Secondly

Secondly, None are accounted Members of the Church, according to the Liturgie, but such as are born again of Water and the Spirit, and are by Regeneration made Members of Christ, Children of God; and Inheritors of the Kingdome of Heaven. If it be true that the Priests did Regenerate and Invest us into a Right to God's Kingdome, by that Act of Baptisme, so called, as they have told us they did; What true Spiritual Power and Gospel Authority have the Bishops and Priests to dispossesse us of that Right to Gods Kingdome again, either by Church Censure or Excommunication.

And if they made us Children of God, Members of Christ, and Inheritors of the Kingdome of Heaven, by that Act of Baptisme, so called, as they say they did; Then what Spiritual Right and Gospel Authority have they to persecute the Members of Christ, and Children of God, about matters of Faith and Salvation, and things appertaining to the Kingdome of God? Is not that to act contrary to the Liturgie of the Church? And do not such actions staine their Profession, and violate the Fundamentals of the Episcopal and Protestant Religion?

And if they made us Children of God, Members of Christ, and Inheritors of the Kingdome of Heaven, by that act of Baptisme, so called; Did they but make us so for that present time onely, or for continuance and perpetuity? By their own account they did not make us so for that present
D time

time onely, but for continuance and perpetuity; for they say they made us Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven, and their Faith and Judgement is, that we cannot Inherit the Kingdome of Heaven whilst in this Life, till after Death; and therefore it must needs be understood that they intended to make us so for continuance and perpetuity: Then what Right have they to Excommunicate and Persecute us? For if they cut off the Members of Christ either by Excommunication or Persecution, do they not destroy Christ in his Members in so doing? And is not that contrary to the Minde and Will of God, and against the Innocency and true Intent of the Liturgie of the Church of *England*? And doth not such proceedings beget a dislike and dis-esteem to them who so openly and manifestly erre from their owne Principles or Fundamentals in matters of Religion and Practise as aforesaid?

And for as much as the Bishops and Priests doe promise to People, that by the Act of Baptisme (so called) they do Regenerate their Children, and do thereby conclude them Regenerate, saying Dearly Beloved, Seeing this Childe is Regenerate and Borne again, let us give Thanks; Then if by that Act they do not Regenerate them, they doe neither truly Baptize them, nor Admit them into Church Fellowship; Do not they therefore pretend to do that which they neither intend, or really do not perform? And is it not time for people to take notice of them? For if no Priest in *England* can Regenerate any, then no Priest in *England* can Baptize

Baptize any, who promise and pretend to Regenerate them by that Act, as aforesaid, and do not.

And seeing that by the Liturgie of the Church of *England*, the Church is declared to be the Household and Family of God; and by the Act that none may meet out of their owne Family, above the number of five, under pretence of Religion, and Worship of God, contrary to the Liturgie of the Church of *England*; Then it seems that they who are of that Family, and the whole Household and Family of God may meet together by that Act, and not above five amongst them that are not of the Household and Family of God.

And the Liturgie of the Church of *England* doth plainly say, that the whole Body of the Church is governed and sanctified by the Spirit of God: So that the Household and Family of God are under the Teachings, Sanctification, and Government of the Spirit of God: And by the Act it seemes all such may meet together to Worship God; and not above five joyn with them, that are not Governed and Sanctified by the Spirit of God; for they are not Members of the Church, nor of the Household and Family of God, who are not Governed and Sanctified by the Spirit of God: because the whole Body of the Church is said to be Governed and Sanctified by the Spirit of God, and that according to the Liturgie, as aforesaid.

Is it not evident then, or may it not be concluded that by the said Act there is a toleration given, for all to meet together, who are under the administration,

and teachings of God, who are governed and sanctified by the spirit of God, and then what will this be against the meeting of the Quakers, and innocent people of God, if rightly understood, and not perverted, because they are the onely people that meet together in point of religion and worship of God, according to the Liturgie, because they are under the administrations, and teachings of God, and are governed and sanctified by the spirit of God.

And doth it not remain true, that those who are prohibited by the act to meet above the number of five, contrary to the Liturgie of the Church of England, under pretence of religion, are such as are not of the household and family of God, that is to say such as daily errs and goes astray from the wayes of God, and are not governed and sanctified by the spirit of God as afore said.

Concerning Infants Baptisme.

And as concerning Baptisme, if the thing thereby promised and pretended be not effected, the end doth not answer the means as they call it, or indeed the meanes doth not lead to the end, so that it is more a pretence and shew or shadow then any thing of substance, and as necessary unto salvation, and when the means leads to the end, or the end answers the means, so that the Priests do make it appear that they really can, and do regenerate people by that act of baptisme so called,

as they pretend, then we shall believe them, and bring children unto them, to have that conferred upon them, and in the mean time it is but reasonable to be excused for not bringing little children unto them, whilst that part is more pretence then real practice or substance, and we judge it a reasonable thing to be freed, and clearly acquitted from all Ecclesiastical censures, and temporall punishments concerning the same, and if you think otherwise, let the Lord and all true experienced, sound, upright hearted Christians judge between you and us in this case.

Concerning the Sacrament so called.

Is there any true spirituall right or gospel authority whereby any should be punished by Ecclesiastical censures or temporal punishments for not receiving that as an Ordinance of Christ, which the Scriptures no where makes mention off? if you say no;

Then we say the Scripture nowhere makes mention of the word Sacrament, in any place that we ever read of, and if you can produce any place of Scripture, that plainly makes mention of the word Sacrament, when you have produced that Scripture, we shall take it into due consideration, and if you say there is no such Scripture to be produced, but the word sacrament is a significant word, and it signifies the receiving of Christ Iesus, and of an inward and spiritual grace which are holy things, if so? then to receive Christ Iesus in spirit and the grace of God is

to.

to receive the signification of the word Sacrament, and so effectually to receive the Sacrament or the thing signified, which is the end of the sign, and we have received and do receive Christ Iesus, and the inward grace of the spirit of God, and so in effect do receive the Sacrament, or signification of the sign, and ought to be freed from all Ecclesiastical censures, and temporal punishments concerning the same.

1. Then to meet together in point of Religion and worship of God with them that are governed and sanctified by the spirit of God, is to come to the Church, and that according to the Liturgie or common prayer book, therefore such are to be tolerated, and ought not to be molested or troubled, but rather freed from all Ecclesiastical censures and temporal punishments concerning the same.

2. To meet together to preach and pray, and perform duty to God in point of Religion and worship of God, is not to meet contrary to the practice of the Liturgie of the Church of England, because they pretend to do the same, therefore they who meet together in the fear, wisdom, and spirit of God, to preach, pray, and perform duty to God, in point of Religion, as worshippers of him, ought not to be molested, disturbed, or called in question for so doing.

THE END.